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Center for Social Policy
McCormack Institute of Public Affairs
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# Characteristics of Homeless Individuals Accessing Massachusetts Emergency Shelters 1999-2001

**Publication of:**
**CSPTech (Connection, Service, and Partnership) through Technology Project Center for Social Policy, McCormack Institute University of Massachusetts, Boston**

**By: Tatjana Meschede, Michelle Kahan, Michelle Hayes, Donna Haig Friedman**
**With: CSPTech Staff: David Canavan, Michael Faris, Susan Ma, Philip Mugo, Jennifer Raymond, Bill Silvestri, Brian Sokol, Nancy Sullivan, Jason Wilson**

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***Introduction***

The Center for Social Policy (CSP) at the McCormack Institute, University of Massachusetts Boston oversees the Connection, Service, and Partnership through Technology (CSPTech) project.[1] CSPTech operates a homeless management information system being implemented throughout the Commonwealth. Founded in 1995, this project is a networked computerized record-keeping system that allows homeless service providers across Massachusetts to collect uniform client information over time. This information is aggregated in a database used by service providers, advocates, government officials, researchers, and people experiencing homelessness. Analysis of this information is critical to efforts to understand the extent of this problem in Massachusetts in an attempt to break the cycle of homelessness and poverty.

Through multi-year contracts with the City of Boston and the State of Massachusetts, more than 110 homeless programs serving individuals are currently involved in the CSPTech project, representing over 60% of the homeless individuals served in emergency shelter in the state. These data represent the result of an intensive, cooperative effort over the past several years of service providers throughout the state of Massachusetts. Through the period of transition of the CSPTech project from use of an older access-based system to a new web-based information system, CSPTech staff, service providers, and consumers felt the effects of a shift in culture with the implementation of a new Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) in Massachusetts.

***Representativeness***

The data contained in this report represent 62% (N=11,173[2]) of those persons served in the Commonwealth's individual emergency shelter programs during 2001[3]. With the implementation of the new web-based information system several of the larger emergency shelter providers chose to use a random sampling system during this calendar year, thus obtaining detailed information from one out of every 100 guests on a nightly basis. Data obtained utilizing this method were weighted appropriately.

Based upon policies developed by the project's Steering Committee, aggregate data must meet a minimum threshold criterion before they can be released; data must represent at least 60% of those persons served in a region. Based on a calculation of client records contained in the database versus system capacity for a particular period, the data are deemed eligible for release.

The report also provides comparisons to data gathered in 1999 and 2000. It should be noted that with the 2001 conversion to a new web-based system some questions and response categories differ from the old system to the new. Thus, for some variables comparisons are not available.

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[1] This project was previously referred to as the ANCHoR Project.

[2] Please note the total number of records includes a weighted random sample from the three shelters operated by the Boston Public Health Commission

[3] See appendix A for complete list of participating agencies.

***Data Quality***
Even though 2001 was a transition year to a new web-based data collection tool, overall data quality improved over that in prior years. For example, in 2001 income assessments were provided for 64 percent of the total sample as compared to 16 percent in 2000 and 22 percent in 1999.

***Limitations***
These data were collected in large part by interviewing people experiencing homelessness, sometimes on the street, and most often in shelters or other homeless service agencies. These data do not capture information on people who are in doubled-up living situations, and others who are homeless but do not come into contact with the service system.

In the trend analyses, the numbers of respondents in the various categories are often quite different. For example, the number of respondents in 2001 for education and prior living are almost double the number of respondents in 2000 and 1999. While these comparisons provide noteworthy information, the variations in response proportions should be taken into account when making generalizations about the data that follow. The results, can, however, still provide some indication of the differences between the various homeless populations across the two years.

Data from individuals who were interviewed as part of the random sampling strategy employed by the Boston Public Health Commission's three emergency shelter programs were weighted in the final aggregate database. Due to the random sampling process, we are not able to calculate an unduplicated count for portions of the data.

***Report Structure***
The report begins by focusing on the demographic characteristics of those accessing the individual emergency shelters in 2001. Where possible, these data are compared to those findings for individuals served in 2000 and 1999. The report then compares members of the individual shelter population by gender and age group. Finally, individuals served in 2001 are analyzed by region, contrasting those from Boston with others from the rest of the state. In addition, the characteristics of individuals served in Boston during 2001 are compared to their counterparts in 2000 and 1999.

***Acknowledgement***
We thank the thousands of homeless people who shared their personal information, as well as the hundreds of staff who have conducted interviews, entered data, and managed the project. We also thank the members of the CSPTech team who continue to labor long and hard with each of the program sites.

**Comparative Highlights: Individuals in Emergency Shelter 2001 and comparisons to those served in 2000 and 1999**

Demographic Characteristics (p.4)

- In 2001, more homeless individuals identified themselves as African American or Latino, and fewer as White.
- In 2001, more homeless individuals reported having attained a high school diploma or GED than those in prior years.
- There were no noteworthy changes in gender, age, marital status, and veteran status from previous years.

Living Situation Prior to Shelter Entry (p.5)

- In 2001, individual shelter users were much more likely to have stayed outdoors the night prior to shelter entry than those in prior years. In addition, fewer reported having stayed with friends or family and rented their own home prior to shelter entry. These changes, however, may be due to the shift in data collection tools rather than indicating real changes in this population's living situations prior to shelter entry.
- Between two to four percent of individual shelter users were released from jail or prison to a homeless shelter over the three years covered in this report.
- The proportion of homeless shelter users released from a substance abuse treatment facility consistently decreased over the three years covered in this report.

Health Insurance Coverage (p.5)

- Except for a slight increase in Medicaid coverage and a slight decrease in private coverage, there were no notable changes in health insurance coverage for homeless individuals in 2001 compared to their counterparts in prior years.

Special Needs Assessment (p.5)

- Thirty-eight percent of all individuals in emergency shelter reported at least one kind of special need. Of those reporting at least one kind of special need, half reported an alcohol problem, one-fifth a mental health, another one-fifth a drug problem, a little less than one-fifth medical problems, and fewer than 5% other problems.

Income Assessments (p.6)

- Of those reporting income in 2001, more than two-fifths reported earnings from employment averaging slightly over $1100 per month.
- From 2000 to 2001, notably fewer individuals accessed SS, SSI and/or SSDI income, and notably more had access to Food Stamps.
- Income amounts increased slightly in 2001 for almost all income sources.

**Table 1:**
**Demographic Characteristics of Homeless Individuals**

| | 2001 (N=11,173) | 2000 (N=10,219) | 1999 (N=8,411) |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Gender** | (N= 10,724) | (N=10,207) | (N=8,381) |
| Male | 79% | 81% | 78% |
| Female | 21% | 19% | 22% |
| **Race** | (N= 9,341) | (N=9,144) | (N=6,175) |
| White | 52% | 60% | 55% |
| African American | 28% | 25% | 28% |
| Latino | 14% | 10% | 12% |
| Other | 4% | 3% | 3% |
| Multiracial | NA | 1% | 1% |
| Native American | 1% | 1% | 1% |
| Asian | 1% | 1% | <1% |
| Pacific Islander | <1% | <1% | <1% |
| Alaskan Native | <1% | <1% | 0% |
| **Age** | (N=9,618 ) | (N=10,207) | (N=8,390) |
| Under 18 | <1% | <1% | <1% |
| 18-24 | 10% | 10% | 11% |
| 25-34 | 19% | 21% | 24% |
| 35-44 | 33% | 36% | 36% |
| 45-54 | 26% | 24% | 20% |
| 55-64 | 9% | 7% | 6% |
| 65 and older | 2% | 2% | 2% |
| **Average Age** | 41 | 41** | 39** |
| **Education** | (N=4,734) | (N=2,751) | (N=2,287) |
| Grade school | 5% | 8% | 15% |
| Some high-school | 23% | 28% | 29% |
| HS grad./GED | 46% | 38% | 36% |
| Some college/AA | 18% | 20% | 14% |
| BS/BA | 8% | 5% | 4% |
| Grad. Degree | 0% | 1% | 2% |
| **Marital Status** | (N= 8,580) | (N=8,297) | (N=6,055) |
| Single/Never Married | 60% | 60% | 63% |
| Divorced | 21% | 22% | 20% |
| Separated | 9% | 9% | 9% |
| Married/Partnered | 7% | 7% | 7% |
| Widowed | 2% | 2% | 2% |
| **Veterans** | (N= 11,173) | (N=10,219) | (N=8,411) |
| Yes | 18% | 21% | 15% |

** Statistically significant difference, p<.001

**Table 2:**
**Residence of Homeless Individuals Prior to Entering Shelter**

| Prior Residence | 2001 (N=4,348) | 2000 (N=2,384) | 1999 (N=2,550) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Other Shelter | 34% | 26% | 36% |
| Homes of Relative/Friends | 7% | 21% | 14% |
| Rented Home | 12% | 20% | 16% |
| Detox/Substance Abuse Treatment Ctr | 6% | 9% | 14% |
| Street/Park/Car/Abandoned Building | 21% | 5% | 4% |
| Owned Home | 2% | 5% | 2% |
| Jail/Prison/Detention Center | 2% | 4% | 2% |
| Supervised Living[a] | 2% | 3% | 3% |
| Mental Health/Other Hospital | 1% | 2% | 3% |
| Other | 11% | 2% | 2% |
| Boarding House (A) | NA | 2% | 2% |
| Hotel/Motel (A) | NA | 1% | 1% |
| Transitional Housing | 3% | 1% | 1% |

[a] Foster home, halfway house, or nursing home.
(A) = Information was only provided in the old ANCHoR system.

**Table 3:**
**Health Insurance Coverage of Homeless Individuals**

| Health Insurance | 2001 (N=3,958) | 2000 (N=2,337) | 1999 (N=1,532) |
|---|---|---|---|
| No Health Insurance | 31% | 32% | 30% |
| Medicaid/Mass Health | 61% | 55% | 56% |
| Private Plan | 3% | 6% | 6% |
| Medicare | 3% | 4% | 4% |
| VA | 2% | 2% | 2% |
| HMO | 1% | 2% | 2% |

**Table 4:**
**Special Needs Assessments of Homeless Individuals**

| Number of Special Needs | % of records indicating needs (N=4,267) | % of total (N=11,173) |
|---|---|---|
| One Special Need | 79% | 30% |
| Two Special Needs | 14% | 5% |
| **Three or More Special Needs** | 7% | 3% |
| Type of Special Needs * | | |
| Alcohol | 53% | 20% |
| Mental Health | 21% | 8% |
| Drugs | 20% | 8% |
| Medical | 17% | 7% |
| PTSD | 3% | 1% |
| Hearing, Visual, Speech | 3% | 1% |
| Cognitive, Developmental, Learning | 3% | 1% |
| HIV/AIDS | 1% | <1% |

* More than 1 response possible

**Table 5:**
**Income by Category of Homeless Individuals**[4]

| Income Category | 2001 (N=11,173) | |
|---|---|---|
| Employment[a] | 25% | |
| Public Assistance[b] | 25% | **Data cannot be compared to previous years as data were collected in different formats** |
| Employment and Public Assistance | 1% | |
| Income not reported | 48% | |
| Other[c] | 1% | |

[a]Wages,
[b]TANF, Food Stamps, SS/SSI/SSDI, unemployment
[c]Child support/alimony, retirement, veterans pension

**Table 6:**
**Income Sources and Amounts of Homeless Individuals with Reported Income at Shelter Entry**

| Income | 2001 (N=7,168) | 2000 (N=1,642) | 1999 (N=1,818) |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Income Source**[a] | | | |
| SS/SSI/SSDI | 31% | 45% | 46% |
| Employment Income | 41% | 43% | 48% |
| Other Public Benefits[b] | 7% | 10% | 12% |
| Food Stamps | 11% | 7% | 10% |
| TAFDC | 2% | 2% | 2% |
| Other Private Income[c] | 2% | 2% | 3% |
| **Average Monthly Amount** | | | |
| SS/SSI/SSDI | $588 | $576 | $563 |
| Employment Income | $1,115 | $1,012 | $962 |
| Other Public Benefits[b] | $508 | $388 | $332 |
| Food Stamps | $148 | $113 | $99 |
| TAFDC | $442 | $366 | $343 |
| Other Private Income[c] | $427 | $514 | $498 |

[a]More than one response possible.
[b]Earned Income Tax Credit (A), refugee assistance (A), veterans administration disability (A), veterans pension, workers' compensation (A), unemployment, general assistance, rent supplements (A), WIC (A), and alimony/child support.
[c]Retirement, investments (A), savings (A), private disability insurance (A), and other pension (A).

(A) = Information was only provided in the old ANCHoR system.

[4] For the analysis in Table 5, each individual providing income information was grouped into one of five income categories. As such, those with multiple sources were counted only once, as compared to Table 6, where more than one income source was reported.

**Comparative Highlights: Homeless Men and Women in Emergency Shelter 2001 and comparisons to those served in 2000 and 1999**

Demographic Characteristics (p.8)

- More homeless men in 2001 identified themselves as African American or Latino compared to 2000.
- Homeless men continue to be statistically significantly older than homeless women.
- The overall increase in high school graduation was evenly distributed among homeless men and women.
- Overall, there were no changes in marital status and veteran status compared to previous years.

Living Situation Prior to Shelter Entry (p.9)

- The overall increase in reporting another shelter or the streets as the place of residence prior to shelter entry and the decrease in having rented a home prior to shelter entry in 2001 as compared to 2000 are mostly accounted for by homeless men.
- Fewer homeless men and homeless women reported staying with family and/or friends prior to shelter entry compared to prior years.

Health Insurance Coverage (p.9)

- As in the prior years, more homeless women than men reported Medicaid/MassHealth coverage in 2001.

Special Needs Assessment (p.9)

- More homeless men reported alcohol and/or drug problems than homeless women, and homeless women reported mental health problems to a greater degree than homeless men.

Income Assessments (p.10)

- Of those reporting income in 2001, men were more likely to be employed than women, while women were more likely to receive SS/SSI/SSDI or food stamps.
- Homeless men received statistically significant more income from SS/SSI/SSDI and employment than homeless women.
- Homeless women received statistically significant more income from other public benefits than homeless men.

**Table7:**
**Demographic Characteristics of Individual Homeless Men and Women**

| | Men 2001 (N=8,491) | Women 2001 (N=2,243) | Men 2000 (N=7,234) | Women 2000 (N=1,898) | Men 1999 (N=5,270) | Women 1999 (N=1,649) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Race** | (N=7,332) | (N=2,243) | (N=5,270) | (N=1,649) | (N=7,332) | (N=2,243) |
| White | 52% | 52% | 61% | 56% | 56% | 54% |
| African American | 28% | 29% | 24% | 29% | 25% | 30% |
| Latino | 15% | 12% | 11% | 8% | 15% | 11% |
| Other | 4% | 5% | 3% | 4% | 3% | 3% |
| Native American | 1% | 1% | 1% | 1% | 1% | 1% |
| Multiracial | NA | NA | <1% | 1% | <1% | 1% |
| Asian | 1% | 1% | <1% | 1% | <1% | 1% |
| Pacific Islander | <1% | <1% | <1% | 0% | <1% | <1% |
| Alaskan Native | <1% | <1% | <1% | 0% | 0% | 0% |
| **Age** | (N=7,584) | (N=1,964) | (N=8,222) | (N=1,969) | (N=6,496) | (N=1,866) |
| Under 18 | <1% | <1% | <1% | <1% | <1% | <1% |
| 18-24 | 8% | 16% | 9% | 15% | 10% | 17% |
| 25-34 | 19% | 21% | 21% | 22% | 24% | 24% |
| 35-44 | 33% | 32% | 36% | 33% | 37% | 33% |
| 45-54 | 28% | 20% | 25% | 20% | 21% | 18% |
| 55-64 | 9% | 7% | 7% | 7% | 7% | 5% |
| 65 and older | 2% | 3% | 2% | 3% | 2% | 3% |
| **Average Age** | 42** | 39** | 41** | 39** | 40 | 39 |
| **Education** | (N=3,746) | (N=946) | (N=1,758) | (N=984) | (N=1,516) | (N=769) |
| Grade school | 6% | 1% | 8% | 8% | 14% | 12% |
| Some high-school | 22% | 29% | 28% | 27% | 30% | 30% |
| HS grad./GED | 47% | 40% | 40% | 35% | 39% | 34% |
| Some college/AA | 18% | 20% | 19% | 23% | 13% | 18% |
| BS/BA | 8% | 11% | 4% | 6% | 4% | 4% |
| Grad. Degree | 0% | 0% | 1% | 1% | 1% | 2% |
| **Marital Status** | (N=6,735 | (N=1,779) | (N=6,561) | (N=1,721) | (N=4,593) | (N=1,424) |
| Single/Never Married | 60% | 62% | 59% | 62% | 63% | 62% |
| Divorced | 22% | 18% | 23% | 19% | 21% | 16% |
| Separated | 9% | 9% | 9% | 7% | 9% | 9% |
| Married/Partnered | 7% | 8% | 7% | 9% | 6% | 9% |
| Widowed | 2% | 3% | 2% | 3% | 2% | 4% |
| **Veterans** | (N=8,491) | (N=2,243) | (N=8,233) | (N=1,970) | (N=6,505) | (N=1,873) |
| Yes | 23% | 3% | 25% | 2% | 19% | 2% |

** Statistically significant difference p<.001

**Table 8:**
**Residence of Homeless Men and Women Prior to Entering Shelter**

| Prior Residence | Men 2001 (N= 3,275) | Women 2001 (N=1,058) | Men 2000 (N=1,490) | Women 2000 (N=890) | Men 1999 (N=1,860) | Women 1999 (N=863) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Other Shelter | 37% | 26% | 25% | 27% | 41% | 27% |
| Rented Home | 10% | 17% | 22% | 17% | 16% | 15% |
| Homes of Friends or Relatives | 5% | 12% | 15% | 30% | 10% | 22% |
| Detox./Substance Abuse Treatment Center | 6% | 7% | 11% | 4% | 16% | 13% |
| Owned Home | 1% | 3% | 6% | 2% | 2% | 1% |
| Jail/Prison/Detention Center | 2% | 1% | 6% | 2% | 3% | 1% |
| Street/Park/Car/Abandoned Building | 24% | 9% | 3% | 7% | 3% | 7% |
| Supervised Living[a] | 3% | 1% | 3% | 3% | 2% | 3% |
| Boarding House | 0% | 0% | 3% | 2% | 2% | 1% |
| Mental Health/Other Hospital | 1% | 2% | 2% | 2% | 2% | 3% |
| Other | 9% | 20% | 2% | 2% | 2% | 2% |
| Hotel/Motel | 0% | 0% | 1% | 3% | <1% | 2% |
| Transitional Housing | 3% | 3% | 1% | <1% | 1% | <1% |

[a]Foster home, halfway house, or nursing home.

**Table 9:**
**Health Insurance Coverage of Homeless Men and Women**

| Health Insurance | Men 2001 (N=3,275) | Women 2001 (N=1,058) | Men 2000 (N=1,500) | Women 2000 (N=837) | Men 1999 (N=918) | Women 1999 (N=613) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| No Health Insurance | 34% | 21% | 37% | 22% | 31% | 22% |
| Medicaid/Mass Health | 57% | 70% | 49% | 65% | 52% | 62% |
| Private Plan | 3% | 4% | 6% | 6% | 6% | 6% |
| Medicare | 3% | 3% | 3% | 5% | 6% | 7% |
| VA | 2% | 0% | 4% | <1% | 4% | <1% |
| HMO | 1% | 2% | 2% | 3% | 2% | 2% |

| Table 10: Special Needs Assessments of Homeless Men and Women | % of records with special needs | | % of total sample | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Men 2001 | Women 2001 | Men 2001 | Women 2001 |
| **Number of Special Needs** | (N=3,293) | (N=1003) | (N=8,491) | (N=2,243) |
| One Special Need | 77% | 86% | 30% | 38% |
| Two Special Needs | 15% | 12% | 6% | 5% |
| Three or More Special Needs | 8% | 2% | 8% | 1% |
| **Type of Special Needs *** | | | | |
| Alcohol | 59% | 33% | 23% | 15% |
| Mental Health | 18% | 30% | 7% | 13% |
| Drugs | 23% | 11% | 9% | 5% |
| Medical | 17% | 16% | 7% | 7% |
| PTSD | 3% | 1% | 1% | <1% |
| Hearing, Visual, Speech | 5% | 4% | 2% | 2% |
| Cognitive, Developmental, Learning, Alzheimers | 3% | 5% | 1% | 2% |
| HIV/AIDS | 1% | 1% | <1% | 1% |

* More than 1 response possible

**Table 11:**
**Income by Category of Homeless Men and Women at Shelter Entry**

| Income Category | Men 2001 (N=8,491) | Women 2001 (N=2,243) |
|---|---|---|
| Employment[a] | 27% | 21% |
| Public Assistance[b] | 23% | 35% |
| Employ & Public Assistance | 1% | 1% |
| Income not reported | 48% | 42% |
| Other[c] | 1% | 1% |

**Data cannot be compared to previous years as data were collected in different formats**

[a]Wages,
[b]TANF, Food Stamps, SSI/SSDI, unemployment
[c]Child support/alimony, retirement, veterans pension

**Table 12:**
**Income Sources and Amounts of Homeless Men and Women with Reported Income at Shelter Entry**

| Income | Men 2001 (N=4,900) | Women 2001 (N=1,462) | Men 2000 (N=1,008) | Women 2000 (N=633) | Men 1999 (N=1,257) | Women 1999 (N=560) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Income Source**[a] | | | | | | |
| SS/SSI/SSDI | 33% | 41% | 38% | 57% | 40% | 59% |
| Employment Income | 49% | 34% | 53% | 27% | 56% | 31% |
| Other Public Benefits[b] | 8% | 8% | 10% | 10% | 12% | 12% |
| Food Stamps | 11% | 20% | 5% | 11% | 7% | 15% |
| Other Private Income[c] | 2% | <1% | 2% | 1% | <1% | 6% |
| TAFDC | 1% | 5% | <1% | 5% | 3% | 3% |
| **Average Monthly Amount** | | | | | | |
| SS/SSI/SSDI | $596* | $567* | $585 | $565 | $578 | $536 |
| Employment Income | $1,123* | $1,039* | $1,085** | $762** | $1,018 | $709 |
| Other Public Benefits[b] | $390** | $550** | $411 | $335 | $43 | $295 |
| Food Stamps | $148 ns | $149 ns | $116 | $109 | $92 | $108 |
| Other Private Income[c] | $426 ns | $430 ns | $535 | $445 | $305 | $346 |
| TAFDC | $466 ns | $423 ns | $133 | $385 | $434 | $652 |

[a]More than one response possible.
[b]Earned Income Tax Credit (A), refugee assistance (A), veterans administration disability (A), veterans pension, workers' compensation (A), unemployment, general assistance, rent supplements (A), WIC (A), and alimony/child support.
[c]Retirement, investments (A), savings (A), private disability insurance (A), and other pension (A).
(A)= Information was only provided in the old ANCHoR system.

* Statistically significant difference between men and women p<.01
** Statistically significant difference between men and women p<.001
ns: Statistically non significant

**Comparative Highlights: Homeless Youth, Adults, and Elderly in Emergency Shelter 2001 and comparisons to those served in 2000 and 1999**

For this set of comparisons, the data were divided by age category:

- Youth – ages 18-24,
- Adults – ages 25-54, and
- Elderly – 55 and over.

Demographic Characteristics (p.12)

- The overall changes of African Americans and Latinos among homeless individuals in emergency shelter in 2001 when compared to 2000 were evenly distributed among the different age groups, as were the changes in educational status.
- There were no major changes in gender, marital and veteran status from the prior years.

Living Situation Prior to Shelter Entry (p.13)

- The overall decrease in renting prior to shelter entry in 2001 was mostly accounted by homeless adults and homeless elderly.
- In 2001, the proportion of individuals entering their current shelter coming from a different emergency shelter increased most dramatically for homeless youth, whereas the proportion of individuals doubling up with relatives and/or friends decreased most dramatically for homeless youth.
- Release from substance abuse treatment facilities slightly increased for youth while it decreased for adults and elderly.
- As in 2000, proportionately fewer homeless youth in 2001 stayed in the streets prior to shelter entry when compared to the other two age groups.

Health Insurance Coverage (p.13)

- Medicaid/Mass Health coverage increased for all three age groups in 2001.

Special Needs Assessment (p.14)

- More homeless youth reported only one special need when compared to the other two age groups.
- Alcohol problems were lowest for homeless youth when compared to the other two age groups.
- As expected, the proportion of homeless individuals with a medical problem increased with age.

Income Assessments (p.14 and p.15)

- Of those reporting income in 2001, more adults and youth were working then their elder counterparts. Those over 55 were more likely to report income from SS/SSI/SSDI and other public benefits.
- Homeless elders reported use of food stamps to a lesser degree than the other two age groups.

**Table 13:**
**Demographic Characteristics of Homeless Youth, Adults, and Elders**

| | Youth 2001 | Adults 2001 | Elderly 2001 | Youth 2000 | Adults 2000 | Elderly 2000 | Youth 1999 | Adults 1999 | Elderly 1999 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Gender** | (N=959) | (N=7,596) | (N=1,061) | (N=1,017) | (N=8,217) | (N=955) | (N=939) | (N=6,703) | (N=703) |
| Male | 66% | 81% | 82% | 71% | 82% | 80% | 66% | 79% | 80% |
| Female | 34% | 19% | 18% | 29% | 18% | 20% | 34% | 21% | 20% |
| **Race** | (N=837) | (N=7,156) | (N=875) | (N=865) | (N=7,402) | (N=866) | (N=850) | (N=6,133) | (N=689) |
| White | 46% | 53% | 65% | 54% | 59% | 69% | 52% | 55% | 68% |
| African American | 25% | 29% | 22% | 22% | 26% | 20% | 23% | 27% | 18% |
| Latino | 19% | 12% | 10% | 15% | 10% | 7% | 18% | 13% | 11% |
| Other | 8% | 4% | 2% | 6% | 3% | 2% | 5% | 3% | 2% |
| Multiracial | NA | NA | NA | 1% | 1% | <1% | 2% | 1% | 1% |
| Native American | 1% | 1% | <1% | 1% | 1% | <1% | <1% | 1% | <1% |
| Asian | 1% | 1% | <1% | 1% | 1% | 1% | 1% | <1% | <1% |
| Alaskan Native | <1% | <1% | <1% | <1% | <1% | <1% | 0% | 0% | 0% |
| Pacific Islander | <1% | <1% | <1% | 0% | <1% | 0% | 0% | <1% | <1% |
| **Education** | (N=386 | (N=3,719) | (N=499) | (N=315) | (N=2,217) | (N=217) | (N=273) | (N=1,817) | (N=192) |
| Grade school | 1% | 5% | 8% | 4% | 8% | 17% | 11% | 13% | 22% |
| Some HS | 44% | 22% | 16% | 48% | 26% | 22% | 48% | 27% | 25% |
| HS grad./GED | 42% | 47% | 46% | 34% | 39% | 34% | 34% | 39% | 31% |
| Some coll/AA | 12% | 19% | 16% | 11% | 22% | 18% | 7% | 16% | 15% |
| BS/BA | 2% | 8% | 14% | 3% | 5% | 6% | <1% | 4% | 6% |
| Grad. Degree | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 1% | 4% | <1% | 2% | 2% |
| **Marital Status** | (N=785) | (N=6,644) | (N=828) | (N=791) | (N=6,705) | (N=793) | (N=659) | (N=4,846) | (N=502) |
| Single/Never Marr | 93% | 59% | 34% | 94% | 59% | 33% | 95% | 61% | 39% |
| Married/Partnered | 4% | 8% | 8% | 3% | 8% | 7% | 3% | 7% | 7% |
| Separated | 2% | 10% | 11% | 2% | 10% | 10% | 2% | 10% | 9% |
| Divorced | 1% | 22% | 38% | 1% | 23% | 41% | <1% | 21% | 35% |
| Widowed | <1% | 2% | 10% | 0% | 2% | 8% | 0% | 2% | 9% |
| **Veterans** | (N=959) | (N=7,596) | (N=1,061) | (N=1,020) | (N=8,229) | (N=956) | (N=943) | (N=6,728) | (N=704) |
| Yes | 2% | 21% | 38% | 3% | 21% | 36% | 2% | 15% | 31% |

**Table 14:**
**Residence of Homeless Youth, Adults, and Elders Prior to Entering Shelter**

| Prior Residence | Youth 2001 (N=365) | Adults 2001 (N=3,483) | Elderly 2001 (N=414) | Youth 2000 (N=262) | Adults 2000 (N=1,906) | Elderly 2000 (N=215) | Youth 1999 (N=287) | Adults 1999 (N=2,045) | Elderl 1999 (N=209 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Homes of Relative/Friends | 14% | 6% | 7% | 43% | 18% | 16% | 29% | 13% | 11% |
| Other Shelter | 37% | 34% | 36% | 20% | 26% | 30% | 27% | 37% | 46% |
| Rented Home | 13% | 12% | 12% | 12% | 21% | 28% | 12% | 17% | 21% |
| Supervised Living[a] | 1% | 2% | 4% | 6% | 3% | 1% | 3% | 2% | 3% |
| Detox./Substance Abuse Treatment Center | 6% | 7% | 2% | 4% | 10% | 3% | 10% | 17% | 3% |
| Owned Home | 1% | 2% | 2% | 3% | 5% | 6% | 2% | 2% | 1% |
| Jail/Prison/Detention Center | 1% | 2% | <1% | 3% | 5% | 1% | 3% | 2% | <1% |
| Street/Park/Car | 11% | 21% | 26% | 2% | 5% | 5% | 6% | 4% | 3% |
| Mental Health/Other Hospital | 1% | 1% | <1% | 2% | 2% | 1% | 2% | 2% | 3% |
| Other | 13% | 11% | 10% | 2% | 2% | 2% | 4% | 1% | 4% |
| Boarding House | NA | NA | NA | 2% | 2% | 5% | 1% | 1% | 3% |
| Hotel/Motel | NA | NA | NA | 2% | 1% | 3% | 1% | 1% | 2% |
| Transitional Housing | 3% | 3% | 1% | 0% | 1% | 1% | <1% | 1% | <1% |

[a]Foster home, halfway house, or nursing home.

**Table 15:**
**Health Insurance Coverage of Homeless Youth, Adults, and Elders**

| Health Insurance | Youth 2001 (N=384) | Adults 2001 (N=3,060) | Elderly 2001 (N=367) | Youth 2000 (N=269) | Adults 2000 (N=1,892) | Elderly 2000 (N=176) | Youth 1999 (N=181) | Adults 1999 (N=1,188) | Elderl 1999 (N=159 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| No Health Insurance | 39% | 30% | 22% | 38% | 32% | 21% | 40% | 27% | 19% |
| Medicaid/Mass Health | 58% | 61% | 59% | 50% | 55% | 53% | 50% | 57% | 53% |
| Private Plan | 1% | 3% | 6% | 8% | 5% | 7% | 7% | 6% | 6% |
| Medicare | 1% | 2% | 9% | 1% | 3% | 13% | 2% | 6% | 16% |
| VA | <1% | 2% | 3% | 0% | 3% | 5% | 0% | 2% | 6% |
| HMO | 1% | 1% | 1% | 2% | 2% | 2% | 2% | 2% | 1% |

| Table 16: Special Needs Assessments | % of records with special needs | | | % of total sample | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Youth 2001 (N=291) | Adults 2001 (N=3,484) | Elderly 2001 (N=434) | Youth 2001 (N=959) | Adults 2001 (N=7,596) | Elderly 2001 (N=1,061) |
| **Number of Special Needs** | | | | | | |
| One Special Need | 90% | 78% | 79% | 27% | 36% | 32% |
| Two Special Needs | 8% | 15% | 15% | 3% | 7% | 6% |
| Three or More Special Needs | 2% | 7% | 6% | 1% | 3% | 3% |
| **Type of Special Needs *** | | | | | | |
| Alcohol | 38% | 56% | 45% | 11% | 25% | 21% |
| Mental Health | 28% | 20% | 27% | 8% | 9% | 13% |
| Drugs | 17% | 22% | 10% | 5% | 10% | 4% |
| Medical | 10% | 16% | 30% | 3% | 7% | 14% |
| PTSD | 0% | 3% | 2% | 0% | 1% | 1% |
| Hearing, Visual, Speech | 5% | 4% | 7% | 2% | 2% | 3% |
| Cognitive, Developmental, Learning, Alzheimers | 7% | 2% | 1% | 2% | 1% | 1% |
| HIV/AIDS | 1% | 1% | <1% | <1% | 1% | <1% |

* More than 1 response possible

**Table 17:**
**Income by Category of Homeless Youth, Adults, and Elders at Shelter Entry[5]**

| Income Category | Youth 2001 (N=959) | Adults 2001 (N=7,735) | Elderly 2001 (N=922) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Employment[a] | 28% | 27% | 19% | |
| Public Assistance[b] | 25% | 26% | 35% | |
| Employ & Public Asst. | 1% | 1% | 2% | **Data cannot be compared to previous years as data were collected in different formats** |
| No Formal Income[c] | NA | NA | NA | |
| Income not reported | 44% | 45% | 43% | |
| Other[d] | 1% | 2% | 2% | |

[a]Wages,
[b]TANF, Food Stamps, SSI/SSDI, unemployment
[c]Child support/alimony, retirement, veterans pension

[5] For the analysis in Table 17, each individual providing income information was grouped into one of five income categories. As such, those with multiple sources were counted only once, as compared to Table 18, where more than one income source was reported.

**Table 18:**
**Income Sources and Amounts of Homeless Youth, Adults, and Elders with Reported Income at Shelter Entry**

| Income | Youth 2001 (N=537) | Adults 2001 (N=4,292) | Elderly 2001 (N=530) | Youth 2000 (N=132) | Adults 2000 (N=1,297) | Elderly 2000 (N=212) | Youth 1999 (N=151) | Adults 1999 (N=1,443) | Elderly 1999 (N=219) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Income Source**[a] | | | | | | | | | |
| Employment Income | 53% | 51% | 36% | 55% | 45% | 24% | 62% | 52% | 22% |
| SS/SSI/SSDI | 32% | 37% | 52% | 30% | 43% | 65% | 26% | 44% | 72% |
| Food Stamps | 23% | 15% | 8% | 17% | 7% | 4% | 18% | 9% | 5% |
| Other Public Benefits[b] | 7% | 9% | 11% | 13% | 9% | 11% | 6% | 12% | 16% |
| TAFDC | 6% | 2% | 2% | 7% | 2% | <1% | 7% | 2% | 0% |
| Other Private Income[c] | 3% | 2% | 4% | 0% | 1% | 7% | 7% | 3% | 3% |
| **Ave. Monthly Amount** | | | | | | | | | |
| Employment Income | $1097 ns | $1100 ns | $1139 ns | $797 | $1051* | $844 | $760 | $992 | $876 |
| SS/SSI/SSDI | $563* | $590 ns | $608* | $539 | $576 | $584 | $491 | $563 | $586 |
| Food Stamps | $173* | $147 ns | $113* | $134 | $110 | $92 | $110 | $97 | $101 |
| Other Public Benefits[b] | $434 ns | $505 ns | $617 ns | $328 | $388 | $419 | $264 | $330 | $359 |
| TAFDC | $454 ns | $440 ns | $455 ns | $284 | $411 | $96 | $400 | $328 | NA |
| Other Private Income[c] | $499 ns | $394 ns | $555 ns | NA | $452 | $570 | NA | $435 | $579 |

[a]More than one response possible.
[b]Earned Income Tax Credit (A), refugee assistance (A), veterans administration disability (A), veterans pension, workers' compensation (A), unemployment, general assistance, rent supplements (A), WIC (A), and alimony/child support.
[c]Retirement, investments (A), savings (A), private disability insurance (A), and other pension (A).
(A)= Information was only provided in the old ANCHoR system.

* Statistically significant difference among age groups in each year p<.01
ns: Statistically non significant

**Comparative Highlights: Geographic comparisons between those served in Boston and the remainder of the state in 2001**

Demographic Characteristics (p.17)

- Homeless shelter users in Boston in 2001 as compared to the remainder of the state were more likely to be:
  - female,
  - non-white,
  - older,
  - single and slightly less likely to be divorced,
  - veterans
- Except for an increase in high school graduation/GED, there were no notable changes among homeless shelter users in Boston in 2001 when compared to their counterparts in 2000.

Living Situation Prior to Shelter Entry (p.18)

- In 2001, homeless shelter users in Boston were less likely to have moved from another shelter to their current shelter, and more likely to have stayed on the streets or doubled up than their counterparts in other parts of the state.
- During 2001, proportionately fewer homeless shelter users in Boston moved to their current shelter coming from a different shelter, doubled up or a substance abuse treatment facility, and more had stayed in the streets than in prior years.

Health Insurance Coverage (p.18)

- There were no notable differences in type of health insurance coverage between the two regions in 2001.
- In 2001, slightly more individuals in Boston reported no health insurance coverage.

Special Needs Assessment (p.19)

- Homeless individuals in Boston were more likely to have more than one disability.
- Homeless individuals in Boston were more likely to have alcohol and drug problems, and/or a medical problem.

Income Assessments (p.20)

- Individual shelter users in Boston reported employment to a higher degree than those not residing in Boston during 2001
- Proportionately substantially fewer individual shelter users in Boston had access to food stamps.

**Table 19:**
**Demographic Characteristics of Homeless Individuals by Region**

| | Individuals Boston 2001 (N=7,151) | Individuals Other Parts of the State, 2001 (N=4,022) | Individuals Boston 2000 (N=4,777) | Individuals Boston 1999 (N=3,755) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Gender** | (N=6,805) | (N=3,954) | (N=4,738) | (N=3,728) |
| Male | 78% | 80% | 76% | 69% |
| Female | 22% | 20% | 24% | 31% |
| **Race** | (N=5,821) | (N=3,5211) | (N=3,836) | (N=3,469) |
| White | 44% | 64% | 48% | 47% |
| African American | 34% | 17% | 36% | 37% |
| Latino | 16% | 11% | 12% | 12% |
| Other | 3% | 6% | 2% | 3% |
| Multiracial | NA | NA | 1% | 1% |
| Native American | 1% | 1% | 1% | 1% |
| Asian | 1% | 1% | 1% | <1% |
| Pacific Islander | <1% | <1% | <1% | <1% |
| **Age** | (N=5,734) | (N=3,884) | (N=4,756) | (N=3,736) |
| Under 18 | <1% | <1% | <1% | <1% |
| 18-24 | 9% | 12% | 9% | 10% |
| 25-34 | 18% | 22% | 19% | 22% |
| 35-44 | 32% | 36% | 34% | 37% |
| 45-54 | 29% | 23% | 26% | 21% |
| 54-64 | 10% | 7% | 9% | 7% |
| 65+ | 3% | 2% | 3% | 3% |
| **Average Age** | 42* | 40* | 42 | 40 |
| **Education** | (N=3,487) | (N=1,247) | (N=965) | (N=1,206) |
| Grade school | 7% | 1% | 10% | 15% |
| Some high-school | 20% | 30% | 33% | 35% |
| HS grad./GED | 46% | 45% | 32% | 32% |
| Some college/AA | 19% | 16% | 18% | 14% |
| BS/BA | 8% | 9% | 5% | 4% |
| Grad. Degree | 0% | 0% | 2% | 2% |
| **Marital Status** | (N=5,324) | (N=3,256) | (N=3,622) | (N=3,139) |
| Single/Never Married | 61% | 59% | 62% | 64% |
| Divorced | 20% | 24% | 19% | 18% |
| Separated | 9% | 8% | 10% | 10% |
| Married | 8% | 7% | 7% | 7% |
| Widowed | 2% | 2% | 2% | 2% |
| **Veterans** | (N=7,151) | (N=4,022) | (N=4,777) | (N=3,755) |
| Yes | 21% | 14% | 26% | 17% |

* Statistically significant difference p<.01

**Table 20:**
**Residence of Homeless Individuals Prior to Entering Shelter by Region**

| Prior Residence | Individuals Boston 2001 (N=3,015) | Individuals Other Parts of the State 2001 (N=1,333) | Individuals Boston 2000 (N=1,651) | Individuals Boston 1999 (N=2,155) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Other Shelter | 30% | 43% | 41% | 39% |
| Rented Home | 11% | 14% | 10% | 14% |
| Homes of Relative/Friends | 8% | 4% | 18% | 13% |
| Detox/Substance Abuse Center | 6% | 7% | 13% | 17% |
| Street/Park/Car/Abandoned Bldg. | 25% | 10% | 5% | 4% |
| Owned Home | 1% | 4% | 3% | 1% |
| Jail/Prison/Detention Center | 1% | 2% | 2% | 1% |
| Supervised Living[a] | 3% | <1% | 1% | 2% |
| Hotel/Motel | NA | NA | 2% | 1% |
| Other | 11% | 12% | 2% | 2% |
| Mental Health/Other Hospital | 1% | 2% | 1% | 2% |
| Boarding House | NA | NA | 2% | 1% |
| Transitional Housing | 3% | 3% | 1% | 1% |

[a]Foster home, halfway house, or nursing home.

**Table 21:**
**Health Insurance Coverage of Homeless Individuals by Region, 2000**

| Health Insurance | Individuals Boston 2001 (N=2,599) | Individuals Other Parts of the State 2001 (N=1,359) | Individuals Boston 2000 (N=692) | Individuals Boston 1999 (N=841) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| No Health Insurance | 30% | 31% | 22% | 26% |
| Medicaid/Mass Health | 61% | 60% | 62% | 55% |
| Private Plan | 4% | 3% | 7% | 6% |
| Medicare | 3% | 3% | 5% | 8% |
| VA | 1% | 3% | 2% | 3% |
| HMO | 1% | 1% | 2% | 2% |

| Table 22: Special Needs Assessments of Homeless Men and Women | % of records with special needs | | % of total sample | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Boston 2001 | Other Parts of the State 2001 | Boston 2001 | Other Parts of the State 2001 |
| **Number of Special Needs** | (N=3,041) | (N=1,226) | (N=7,151) | (N=4,022) |
| One Special Need | 74% | 91% | 32% | 28% |
| Two Special Needs | 17% | 6% | 7% | 2% |
| Three or More Special Needs | 9% | 3% | 4% | 1% |
| **Type of Special Needs *** | | | | |
| Alcohol | 58% | 44% | 24% | 13% |
| Mental Health | 21% | 20% | 9% | 6% |
| Drugs | 25% | 10% | 10% | 3% |
| Medical | 18% | 14% | 8% | 4% |
| PTSD | 3% | 1% | 1% | <1% |
| Hearing, Visual, Speech | 5% | 3% | 2% | 1% |
| Cognitive, Developmental, Learning, Alzheimer | 2% | 2% | 1% | 1% |
| HIV/AIDS | 1% | 1% | <1% | <1% |

* More than 1 response possible

**Table 23:**
**Income by Category of Homeless Individuals at Shelter Entry by Region[6]**

| Income Category | Individuals Boston 2001 (N=7,151) | Individuals Other Parts of the State 2001 (N=4,022) | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Employment[a] | 28% | 20% | |
| Public Assistance[b] | 22% | 30% | |
| Employment and Public Assistance | 1% | 1% | |
| No Formal Income[c] | NA | NA | **Data cannot be compared to previous years as data were collected in different formats** |
| No income reported | 48% | 47% | |
| Other[d] | 1% | 1% | |

[a]Wages,
[b]TANF, Food Stamps, SSI/SSDI, unemployment
[c]Child support/alimony, retirement, veterans pension

**Table 24:**
**Income Sources and Amounts of Homeless Individuals with Reported Income at Shelter Entry by Region**

| Income | Individuals Boston 2001 (N=3,788) | Individuals Other Parts of the State 2001 (N=2,664) | Individuals Boston 2000 (N=1,445) | Individuals Boston1999 (N=1,964) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Income Source**[a] | | | | |
| Employment Income | 55% | 33% | 45% | 45% |
| SS/SSI/SSDI | 32% | 36% | 43% | 39% |
| Food Stamps | 5% | 23% | 9% | 6% |
| Other Public Benefits[b] | 7% | 9% | 8% | 8% |
| TAFDC | 2% | 3% | 2% | 2% |
| Other Private Income[c] | 2% | 3% | 2% | 2% |
| **Average Monthly Amount** | | | | |
| Employment Income | $1145** | $1045** | $1,022 | $967 |
| SS/SSI/SSDI | $589 ns | $585 ns | $553 | $550 |
| Food Stamps | $143 ns | $155 ns | $109 | $105 |
| Other Public Benefits[b] | $586** | $412** | $393 | $364 |
| TAFDC | $433 ns | $452 ns | $325 | $311 |
| Other Private Income[c] | $434 ns | $420 ns | $638 | $727 |

[a]More than one response possible.
[b]Earned Income Tax Credit (A), refugee assistance (A), veterans administration disability (A), veterans pension, workers' compensation (A), unemployment, general assistance, rent supplements (A), WIC (A), and alimony/child support.
[c]Retirement, investments (A), savings (A), private disability insurance (A), and other pension (A).
(A)= Information was only provided in the old ANCHoR system.

*Statistically significant difference between regions p<.01
**Statistically significant difference between regions p<.001
ns: Statistically non significant

[6] For the analysis in Table 23, each individual providing income information was grouped into one of five income categories. As such, those with multiple sources were counted only once, as compared to Table 24, where more than one income source was reported.

## Appendix: Individual Emergency Shelters Contributing Records

| Agencies Providing Records | (N=11,173) |
|---|---|
| Boston Rescue Mission/Kingston House | 5% |
| Homeless Services/Boston Public Health Commission[7] | 26% |
| Housing Assistance Corporation - Individual | 5% |
| Jeremiah's Inn | 1% |
| MainSpring Coalition for the Homeless, Inc. | 8% |
| Massachusetts Veterans Inc. | 2% |
| New England Shelter for Homeless Veterans | 12% |
| Open Pantry Community Services | 1% |
| Pine Street Inn | 13% |
| Quincy Interfaith Sheltering Coalition | 7% |
| Salvation Army Cambridge | 6% |
| ServiceNet- Hampshire County Programs | 1% |
| Shattuck Shelter | 7% |
| Shelter, Inc. | 1% |
| United Homes | 1% |
| Worcester PIP (People In Peril) Shelter, Inc. | 5% |
| Total Count | 100%* |

* Percents may not total 100 due to rounding

[7] The percentage of the total for Boston Public Health Commission's three emergency shelter programs was estimated based upon the total of the number of individuals served and weighted appropriately for those participating in the random sampling process.

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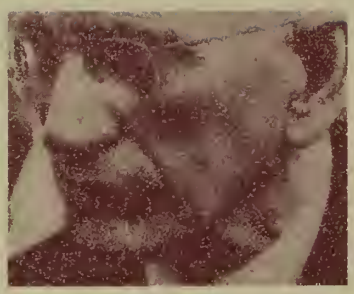

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